

# Pragya UK

## Annual review 2020-21



### 1. Context

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**Welcome to Pragya UK's Annual Review 2020-21.** Pragya is non-profit organisation committed to serving the needs of the most neglected communities across four countries in south Asia and east Africa.

**Our Vision** is one of marginalised communities living dignified lives free from poverty and injustice, fully enjoying the benefits of development in a manner harmonious with cultural heritage and the natural environment.

**Our Mission** is to enable grassroots sustainable development for the poorest, most neglected communities in remote and marginal societies, in a way that preserves and promotes local cultures and fragile ecosystems.

**Our programmes** support multiple UN Sustainable Development Goals, and include: Food, agriculture and rural livelihoods; Conservation and renewable energy; education; empowering women and minorities; Health, safe water and sanitation; and Disaster Management. The diversity of our work enables us to take a holistic approach to development, tackling the multiple dimensions of poverty through our commitment to addressing marginalisation – whatever its form.

**Our Research and Advocacy** shines a light on critical environmental and socioeconomic needs of which there is little awareness, and we promote understanding of such issues in international forums and among development actors and networks. We work cooperatively with government agencies to help bring about positive structural change that reduces the marginalisation of the communities we exist to serve.

With the generosity of our supporters, 2020-21 saw substantial achievements across our programmes.

Covid-19 has been an unprecedented and monumental challenge for the international development sector. Least developed countries and developing economies experienced multiple exacerbating factors that propelled infection rates in contexts of inadequate health and other infrastructure. At the same time, lockdowns and social distancing placed new operational barriers on established approaches to emergency response by development actors. India has been one of the worst hit countries in the world, especially in urban slums with high population density, as well as in marginalised rural areas with poor sanitation and lack of access to healthcare, combined with widespread misinformation about the virus. Pragya has substantial expertise in emergency response, and we rapidly developed a Covid-19 Response Strategy for India addressing critical interlinked challenges, helping the most vulnerable communities through the pandemic whilst innovating and adapting our methodology as the situation demanded. You can learn about our Covid-19 response and impact in section 3.5.

The rapid global decline in biodiversity and the breakdown of ecosystems is one of the most pressing challenges facing mankind today. Pragya believes that sustainable development means delivering socioeconomic growth in a way that respects the natural world and upholds the rich traditions and knowledge base of minority and threatened groups that live in and rely on fragile environments. In 2020-21, Pragya expanded its work in support of UN Sustainable Development Goal #15, towards sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems and halting biodiversity loss. Our pioneering medicinal plants programme, operating at the nexus of biodiversity conservation and economic prosperity, is exemplary of sustainability through the harmonious interaction of people and planet. Section 3.1 has news on this work in east Africa.

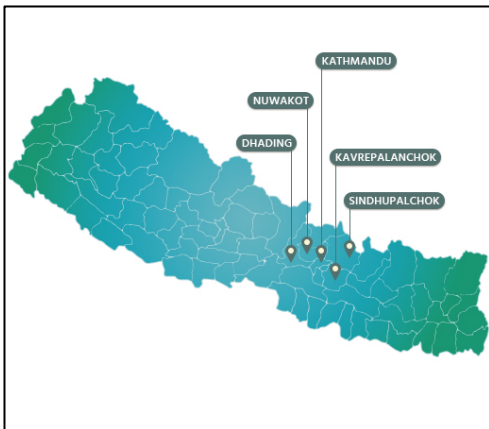
Pragya is a thought leader and a mobiliser in the field of disaster management. Climate change is seeing ever more erratic and unpredictable weather events around the world, and warming in the Himalayan region is up to three times the global average, resulting in many and varied disasters. Following a highly successful four-year pilot initiative, in 2020-21 Pragya secured major partnerships to scale up DMS-Himalaya – our innovation for community-led disaster risk reduction and response in remote geographies. You can read about the progress made and latest impacts in section 3.5.

Climate change also exacerbates the hardships suffered by residents of Bangladesh's 'chars', or river islands – unstable land subject to recurrent flooding, where basic needs are not met and lack of local WASH infrastructure and management pollutes the environment and propels the spread of disease. Following exploratory engagements and pilot work beginning in 2018, Pragya secured partnerships to significantly expand its programme in Bangladesh in 2020-21. Section 3.4 details the latest work to improve environmental and community health in char communities across two districts.

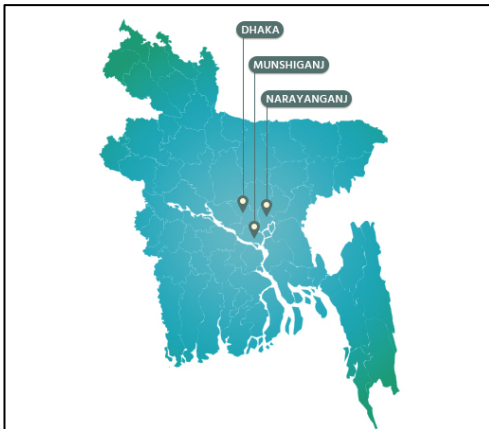
## 2. Target locations and populations



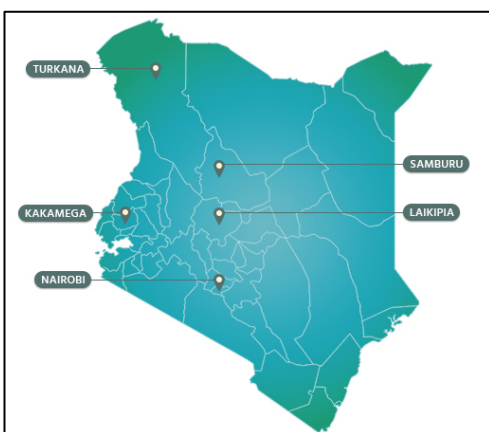
Pragya's work in India is delivered in 8 states across northern, western and eastern regions. In northern India, we work with Himalayan populations addressing the development challenges particular to the region. Disaster management and emergency response is a major aspect of our work here, empowering isolated communities for improved disaster resilience, and lately focussing on Covid-19 response. We also work with Himalayan farming communities to enable climate-adapted agriculture for enhanced food security and nutrition. To the west of India, our work targets impoverished and ethnic minority communities in Rajasthan, with initiatives designed around women's empowerment, as well as access to education. In eastern India, our focus is on climate-smart agriculture, prevention of GBV, and disaster management.



In Nepal, Pragya's work is focused on four districts severely impacted by the 2015 earthquake: Sindhupalchok, Dhading, Kavrepalanchok and Nuwakot. Our rehabilitation work here spans multiple aspects of poverty exacerbated by the 2015 disaster and the recently Covid-19. We deliver WASH solutions and capacity building for communities lacking safe drinking water, quality toilets or handwashing facilities. Our livelihoods work enables uptake of alternative vocations for rapid income generation and sustainable microenterprise development, and we support rural youth with vocational awareness and training. Within a wider patriarchal context, the target districts are hotspots for GBV and human trafficking, and our programme for prevention of GBV is rooted in our research on post-2015 trends in trafficking and GBV.



Pragya's work in Bangladesh focusses on supporting extremely poor and marginalised communities living on Bangladesh's *Chars* – river islands with unstable land subject to recurrent flooding and which lack essential services. Lack of adequate WASH facilities in Char communities mean high incidence of waterborne disease to which children are especially at risk, whilst residents can have little option but to drink groundwater contaminated with arsenic, with its multiple adverse health impacts. Pragya's Bangladesh programme is currently focussed on Dhaka division, which has the highest number of Chars, in the two districts of Munshiganj and Narayanganj, with interventions around site-appropriate WASH solutions, as well as local capacity building for disaster risk reduction and response, oriented around flooding.



In Kenya, Pragya's target areas include the Arid/Semi-Arid Lands of northern Kenya, spanning the counties of Turkana, Laikipia and Samburu. In this region, we work to address the socioeconomic challenges particular to nomadic and semi-nomadic pastoralist groups impacted by climate change, geographic isolation, and marginalisation; this includes enhancing access to quality education, providing locally-appropriate WASH solutions, as well as programmes supporting livelihoods and community health. In western Kenya, we work with communities in Kakamega county, where widespread poverty places unsustainable pressure on the majestic Kakamega rainforest. We empower communities to conserve biodiversity whilst simultaneously supporting poor smallholders to undertake high-value agriculture.

### 3. Projects in 2020-21

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#### **1. Food, agriculture and rural livelihoods**

##### *Cultivating and conserving medicinal plants in Kakamega Forest, Kenya*

Kakamega county, western Kenya, is home to Kakamega rainforest, a UNESCO world heritage site and home to a lush variety of flora and fauna, including many endemic species. Yet the forest is subject to substantial anthropogenic pressure, with deforestation for commercial purposes and human settlement threatening what remains of what was once a much larger rainforest; local communities extract products from the forest worth millions of US Dollars each year.

The forest hosts many species of threatened and endangered medicinal plants, which play an important function in maintenance of the forest's delicate ecosystem, and which are culturally significant through their role in traditional medicine. However, these plants fetch a high price at market, with demand driven by booming international trade in cosmetics and herbal remedies that derive ingredients from these plants. Poverty is rife among smallholder farming communities that live near the forest, which compels farmers to supplement their incomes by harvesting these plants from the wild, stripping the forest in a way that prevents plant regeneration, placing unsustainable pressure of plant populations.

Pragya has a fantastic solution to this desperate situation. We have researched, piloted and are now rolling out a sustainable livelihoods model that simultaneously protects the local environment. We are working with communities adjacent to the forest to empower them as custodians of local biodiversity, whilst also enabling them to cultivate medicinal plants. Key aspects of the model include:

- **Conservation Awareness.** We deliver community and school campaigns to build understanding of the importance of local biodiversity to the forest's ecosystem, and the long-term benefits to the community of conserving the forest.
- **Environmental Stewardship.** We support the development of Community Conservation Councils responsible for managing Community Protected Areas, zones of forest identified as being at high risk of plant depletion, and supported with social fencing measures and monitored / regenerated by the Councils. Community groups are also empowered to conduct environmental advocacy.
- **Cultivation Training.** We provide smallholders with comprehensive cultivation training and start-up inputs to enable them to uptake cultivation of high-value, in-demand species of medicinal plant.
- **Cooperation and Value Addition.** We support smallholders with processing and packaging solutions, ensuring the smallholders can secure the highest prices for their produce. We establish ethical trading linkages and support cooperative working practices that enable access to larger buyers and fair prices.



*Mondia Whitei seedlings ready for distribution to farmers*

2020-21 saw the start of phase II of Pragma's scale vision for medicinal plants programme in Kenya:

Phase	Title	Years	Aims and methodology	Financing	Status
I.	Research and Piloting	2011-2019	Inventorying local MAPs status and researching current trade / value chain. Identify optimum species for cultivation. Pilot test livelihoods model in targeted communities in Kakamega, implemented by Pragma, leveraging highly successful model as applied in Himalayan region. Early-stage trading links established. Results-based model refinement.	Seed / pilot funding for Pragma.	Achieved
II.	Supported Scaling	2020-2025	Scale model to 30% ("critical mass") of communities adjoining Kakamega rainforest. Implementation by Pragma and other CSOs using Pragma's IP-free published model & implementation guide. Advocacy /awareness raising across Kakamega forest communities. Inter-community cooperative formation, trading networks enlarged & strengthened	Grant funding for Pragma and other CSOs.	In progress
III.	Comprehensive Adoption	2026-2030+	Model adopted by 80%+ communities adjoining Kakamega rainforest. Replication by communities through peer-learning and Farmer Expert support, with smallholders re-allocating land to MAP cultivation. Alignment with Kenyan Government's Vision 2030.	Community-driven replication.	Goal

With support from the Souter Charitable Trust, the Ernest Kleinwort Charitable Trust, the Evan Cornish Foundation, the Open Gate Trust, the Margaret Hayman Charitable Trust, and the Gibbs Charitable Trust, Pragma is rolling out apace the *Supported Scaling* phase to 2025. During the year, conservation awareness campaigns reached 350 people across 3 counties bordering Kakamega Forest (Kakamega, Nandi, and Vihiga). A Community Conservation Group, comprising youth and elders from the local communities, was established in Nandi county, and trained to monitor biodiversity. Biodiversity surveys identified a medicinal plant-rich site (presence of 13 species belonging to 9 families of medicinal plant) in the Kakamega Forest area, and the group was assisted to document the plant population and threat status and establish the site as a Community Protected Area.

30 early-adopter female farmers from low-income agricultural households – 10 from each county – were trained in medicinal plants cultivation, covering techniques on planting, weeding, irrigation management, pest/disease control, harvesting, and post-harvest handling. 5000 seedlings of *Mondia whitei* and 600 suckers of *Aloe vera* were distributed to these farmers as a micro-enterprise start-up input, and the farmers have initiated medicinal plants cultivation in their plots. A local nursery was assisted to set up a medicinal plants propagation programme for 3 species of medicinal plant (*Mondia whitei*, *Occimum kilimandscharicum* and *Aloe vera*) in a 1000sq.m. plot to ensure seedling supply both to the 30 farmers and to enable wider uptake of medicinal plants by other farmers in the communities.

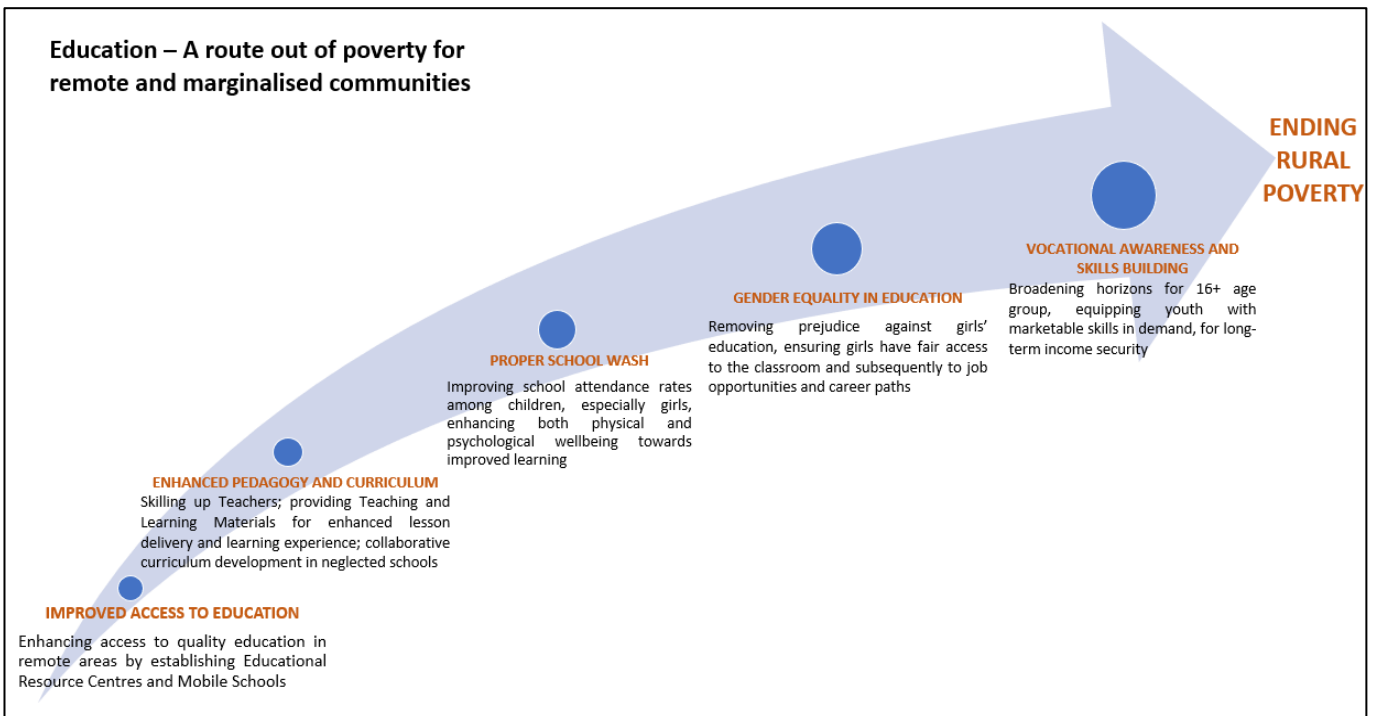
## **2. Education**

Pragma works with some of the most remote and marginalised communities in the world, those existing on the fringes of society where basic services often fail to reach. Many people from these impoverished rural communities scrape a living through smallholder agriculture or pastoralism, in regions where climate change is rapidly diminishing the prospects of such traditional occupations, or as daily wage labourers with little or no income security. Youth in these communities can face a stark choice between following in the footsteps of their parents and the bleak future this holds, or else to migrating to urban centres as unskilled labour with little education, facing low pay or unemployment and likely living in urban slums. Pragma believes in a brighter future for children in marginalised rural areas. We take a multifaceted approach to ensuring disadvantaged children have access to quality education, tackling key aspects of educational deprivation and barriers to school attendance towards ending rural poverty.

→ **Improved Access to Education.** Pragma collaborates with communities and local authorities to extend access to quality education in remote areas where schools are few and far between and heavily oversubscribed. We establish Education Resource Centres in community spaces, equipped with ICT

facilities and a wide variety of age-specific books. For itinerant communities, we deliver mobile education solutions including schools on wheels, tent-based classrooms, and camel libraries, towards ensuring that no child is left behind.

- **Improved Pedagogy and Curriculum.** Pragma works with teachers and para-teachers to improve their teaching skills, enabling them to deliver more impactful lessons. We supply a range of Teaching and Learning Materials that enable more diverse teaching methods, enriching the learning experience of children towards improved attendance, attention span and learning outcomes. We collaborate with communities to ensure curricula in deprived areas is suitable and up to standard.
- **Proper School WASH.** Poor quality or lack of sanitation in schools can be a substantial barrier to attendance, especially among girls. Pragma trains local masons for construction of high-quality, site-appropriate sanitation that ensure cleanliness and privacy, reducing the physical health implications and anxiety experienced by schoolchildren where sanitation facilities are inadequate. We also facilitate schools for the collection and storage of safe drinking water, and deliver school hygiene awareness and training, improving health and thereby learning among schoolchildren.
- **Gender Equality in Education.** Girls face multiple barriers to enrolment and continued participation in school, including gender-based violence, child marriage and teenage pregnancy, a heavy burden of household duties, and lack of confidence in academic ability. Pragma works with communities to address the attitudes that underpin these social challenges, towards improved school attendance and achievement level among girls.
- **Vocational Awareness and Skills Building.** A lack of awareness of vocational routes and poor access to vocational training mean children in remote areas are left with few livelihood options. Pragma builds awareness of alternative vocational routes available to adolescents as they transition into adulthood, and provides certified vocational training courses in locally-demanded occupations, diversifying the skills base in the community and enhancing income security.



Much of Pragma's educational work is interwoven with our other programmes; in 2020-21 our education and vocational trainings were delivered as aspects of broader projects, detailed in the relevant sections.

Voices from the field



*“I am using the 3D atlas DVD and the computer to explain concepts of geography to my class. It’s time we embrace technology.”*

*- Ronald Justice, Geography & Mathematics Teacher  
Shabwali Secondary School, Kakamega county, Kenya*



*“The students here were exposed to computers for the first time. Every day we have 20-25 visitors using the computers”*

*- Selina Emkudi, Community Management Committee  
Kitumnae, Turkana county, Kenya*

### **3. Empowering women and minorities**

#### **Vocational training for women migrant workers in the Indian Himalayas**

In especially poor areas of India and Nepal, gender discrimination in education and in access to vocational training means women are unable to secure gainful employment in their local areas. Compelled by resultant poverty and facing destitution, these women migrate to the Indian Himalayan region in search of work as labourers responsible for the construction and maintenance of mountain roads. These migrants endure appalling living and working conditions. They typically reside in temporary, itinerant camps, in rickety shelter constructed out of discarded materials that provide little protection from the elements. The camps and the worksites often do not have access to adequate sanitation facilities, resulting in a lack of privacy and the spread of waterborne diseases, issues that especially impact women. A lack of proper safety equipment exposes workers to dust and asphalt fumes that lead to eye, heart and lung diseases, and workers often carry out backbreaking work in severe climatic conditions, vulnerable to rockfall and passing traffic, with resultingly high incidence of injury. With little or no access to schools due to geographic constraints and social discrimination, migrant road workers can have little option but have their children accompany them on site, exposing them to these multiple hazards to which they are extremely vulnerable.

Pragya is committed to improving the prospects for women migrant workers, by providing training in safe, alternative livelihoods that can provide sustainable income. In 2020-21, through the generosity of an individual supporter, Pragya conducted training on tailoring for small groups of female migrant workers in the districts of Uttarkashi and Rudraprayag in Uttarakhand. Each programme was delivered over a duration of 8 days, and 4 batches of such programmes were conducted, covering a total of 40 women. The programmes covered the following: tailoring tools and equipment and their upkeep; measurements and material estimation; stitching and cutting (focus on masks; blouse and *salwar*); pricing and book-keeping.



*A tailoring training session in Uttarkashi*

At the close of the training, a thorough evaluation was conducted of the trainees to determine their learning levels and 20 good performers were selected, to whom a Start-up Tailoring Kit was provided for initiating a tailoring enterprise/service. The Start-up Tailoring Kit comprised a portable sewing machine and other small tools (measuring tape, ruler, tailor's chalk, scissors and shears, pin cushion, needles, bodkin, thread cutter, seam ripper, fabric and packaging material). All the women who were provided the Start-up Tailoring Kit have initiated their own tailoring enterprises/services from their own homes and have started taking orders for tailoring clothing from the neighbouring community and from tailor shops in the nearby marketplaces.

The training has empowered the beneficiary women to take control of their futures, building the foundation for microenterprise development and removing the need for these women to undertake seasonal migration to secure work as Himalayan road workers, with all the substantial risks this carries for themselves and their children.

#### **Prevention of trafficking of women and girls in Nepal**

Pragya's wide-ranging gender work includes a commitment to challenging and eliminating Violence against Women and Girls in our countries of operation. Nepal is a highly patriarchal social society, ranking 106 on the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap index 2021, a worse ranking than the prior year; this patriarchy underpins multiple forms of GBV in Nepal including physical, sexual, socioeconomic and

psychological violence and abuse. Victims of GBV in Nepal typically lack the information and networks needed to support their physical and psychological wellbeing and recourse to justice. Nepal is a major source country for the trafficking of women and girls, usually into India and beyond. Victims are typically subjected to years of forced labour and sexual exploitation, suffering severe physical and mental trauma. Where victims are rescued from or escape their situation, reintegration with their home society can be challenging due to social stigma, and they may be left with few prospects for the future.

A major driver of trafficking in Nepal is women's poverty and lack of economic opportunity, which in desperation renders them highly susceptible to the lure of traffickers with promises of employment abroad. This situation is exacerbated in post-disaster contexts. In 2019 Pragma published in-depth research it had conducted on trends in trafficking in Nepal following the massive earthquake of 2015. Spikes in trafficking followed the disaster, as traffickers were able to exploit women's loss of livelihoods and family, homelessness and displacement. The research mapped the causes of trafficking in Nepal, its patterns and trends, methods and routes used by traffickers, the experiences of victims, as well as the current approaches by authorities and civil society to fighting trafficking.

Pragma leveraged this research to develop a multifaceted, integrated model for prevention of violence against women in Nepal, which addresses the full range of change mechanisms from addressing immediate response needs through to root causes.

- Building capacity for women's active resistance to gender-based violence and trafficking, which includes awareness campaigns around GBV and trafficking, peer-group based intervention and support initiatives, and education and assertiveness training for these groups.
- Improving income generation capacity of vulnerable women and families – reducing their economic desperation and associated susceptibility to trafficking. Measures include capacity building for small rural enterprise development in animal husbandry and niche-sector agriculture, as well as vocational training and placements targeting young women in particular.
- Behaviour change initiatives targeting gender-based violence, leveraging opinion-shapers and influential figures in local society, to challenge Nepal's patriarchal norms and win hearts and minds around to more equitable and respectful attitudes to women. This also aims at gendering the social structures that perpetuate the patriarchy.
- Developing support facilities for an informed population and responder network, including targeted information dissemination to key stakeholders, particularly rights information in GBV context for women along with information on women's safe economic migration, and information / status updates for responders on local trafficking and GBV.
- Enhancing the response network to trafficking and GBV, by building capacity of existing and potential support providers to improve service levels of victim support across protection, rescue and rehabilitation.

Gender inequality in Nepal, as in other countries, has been worsened by the onset of COVID-19, indeed the World Economic Forum reports that as a result of COVID-19, closing the gender gap globally has increased by a generation. Nepal's remittance and tourism economies have been decimated by the pandemic, and many women have lost husbands who are traditionally the main family earners. With few skills themselves due to the comparatively poor educational and training opportunities available to women and girls, this has deepened poverty levels among already poor rural women, increasing their vulnerability to GBV and trafficking.

In the wake of COVID-19, Pragma has refined its model for prevention of GBV in 2020-21, particularly around rapid income generation and microenterprise support for women left destitute by the virus, as well as further developing a programme of vocational training opportunities for young women to reduce their risk of falling prey to traffickers. Pragma will be looking for substantial partnerships in 2021-22 to begin scaling its prevention of GBV initiative across districts still struggling to recover from the 2015 disaster as well as those areas where rural women have been substantially impacted by COVID-19.

#### **4. Health, safe water and sanitation**

##### *Safe water and sanitation facilities for marginalised mountain communities, Nepal*

In April 2015, Nepal was hit by a devastating earthquake that killed thousands of people and caused widespread destruction of homes and damage to key buildings and infrastructure critical to the functioning of society, including health, education and WASH infrastructure. Approximately 180,000 household toilets were destroyed, and research conducted by Pragma in Sindhupalchok and Dhading districts following the

disaster indicated that over half the population in these areas lacked access to safe water and adequate sanitation. Whilst an initial media spotlight supported a quick humanitarian response, six years on from the disaster the more substantial rehabilitation needed has been slow and woefully inadequate. Severe poverty and marginalisation in Nepal's remote rural communities have meant lasting impacts; government resources have been unable to match the scale of the devastation, with many household and community WASH resources remaining unusable, propelling open defecation and contamination of water sources that result in high levels of waterborne disease transmission in communities with the least resilience and poor access to healthcare. For the most vulnerable community members, this can prove fatal - over 430 children die in Nepal every year from diarrhoea resulting from dirty water and poor-quality toilets. Damaged or lack of school toilets also causes stress among schoolchildren, resulting in poor performance and absenteeism.

This persisting situation demands continued support from the international development community, and Pragya maintains its commitment to serving those remote communities in Nepal that have failed to recover from the earthquake. Pragya is delivering a comprehensive WASH rehabilitation programme in Nepal that addresses the immediate infrastructure needs whilst building local WASH management capacity:

- **Installation of robust and hygienic water storage tanks.** The tanks are fitted with high-capacity and low-maintenance water filtration technology, enabling nearby availability of safe water, reducing drudgery and providing peace of mind.
- **Construction of high-quality sanitation blocks.** The block comprise separate male / female units designed to ensure privacy, and are constructed to earthquake-resistant designs. They reduce open defecation and hence spread of waterborne diseases, preventing avoidable deaths among children and other more vulnerable community members, and promote improved environmental hygiene.
- **Community WASH awareness sessions.** The sessions cover common waterborne diseases and their transmission, household waste management, hygienic food preparation, household-level water purification methods, as well as menstrual hygiene sessions for women. The sessions have information for all the family, including content specifically oriented to children, learning in a fun and engaging way.
- **Capacity building for local WASH management.** This includes the formation and training of community Water and Sanitation Committees, with a mandate to manage all local WASH facilities and empowered to advocate for enhanced WASH management at the district level.

The programme aims to achieve at least 50% reduction in open defecation and 30% reduction in incidence of waterborne in project communities. In 2020-21, our WASH initiatives in Nepal were made possible through the generous support of the Eleanor Rathbone Charitable Trust, The Drinking Fountain Association, the Harbinson Charitable Trust, and W F Southall Charitable Trust.



*A water storage and filtration unit earlier installed by Pragya in Dhading district, Nepal. Local availability of clean water in remote areas is a major improvement in circumstances for women in particular*

Continuing into 2021-22, the programme is yielding substantial positive results. Clean and safe drinking water is reducing incidence of waterborne disease in target communities. Women in project communities have reported that having local access to safe water means they no longer have to trek miles to collect this critical resource. This has reduced drudgery as well as their exposure to various serious risks associated with such journeys, including injury from rugged terrain and exposure to GBV and trafficking,

the latter being rife in the programme's target districts. The women also report that they now have more time for productive household and income-generating activities, which is reducing poverty levels in project communities. Parents report improved psychological wellbeing as they no longer have to fear the health impacts on their children from exposure to E.coli and other pollutants, and children's school attendance rates are improving as well as enhanced performance in class.

The project is also successfully reducing open defecation in beneficiary communities, improving environmental hygiene and further reducing the spread of waterborne disease and contributing towards district goals of being open defecation free. This has supported improved psychological wellbeing for schoolchildren and boosted attendance rates. Children are also benefitting from enhanced personal hygiene following Pragma's hygiene awareness sessions oriented to children, and evaluation has shown they are able to demonstrate proper handwashing technique, which was not the case prior to project delivery. Selection began during the year for members of Water and Sanitation Committees, which include representatives of poor households as well as local leaders, with training due to cover identification of local WASH challenges, appropriate measures to manage those challenges such as design and delivery of public awareness campaigns, and orientation in conducting advocacy for improved water and sanitation governance at village and district levels. These Councils are key to instilling a sense of ownership of and responsibility for local WASH, and contribute to project sustainability. This work builds on the thousands of people Pragma has already reached through our WASH programme in Nepal since the 2015 earthquake.

#### Voices from the field

*“In the WASH session I have learnt that we not only should think about personal hygiene but also should consider community hygiene to lead a healthy life. We have learnt what are the things that should be done and what should be avoided for maintaining the clean environment”*

*- Ram Hari Thapaliya, Apatar Village*

#### Safe water and sanitation for river island communities, Bangladesh



Bangladesh's river islands, known as *Chars*, are home to the country's severely poor, the displaced and the marginalised. These islands are the last refuge for those who have nothing, where living conditions are extremely challenging and basic needs are not met. Housing commonly consists of ramshackle accommodation, land rights are extremely hard to secure, there are no local healthcare or educational facilities, and residents often scrape a living as daily wage labourers with no income security. The chars are subject to riverbank erosion and recurrent flooding, threatening lives,

forcing repeated displacement and destroying meagre livelihoods assets.

A substantial element of poverty and neglect on chars is the lack of safe drinking water and adequate sanitation. Char residents can have little option but to consume groundwater that is contaminated with arsenic, and which can lead to multiple short- and long-term health problems including abdominal pain, skin lesions, impaired cognitive development in children, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and cancer. Poor quality or absence of sanitation on chars results in commonplace open defecation, polluting the local environment and which, in combination with recurrent flooding, propels the spread of waterborne diseases such as dysentery that can prove fatal for children. Making matters worse, char residents commonly survive as daily wage labourers; water-related sickness can mean an inability to work, resulting in poor diet and malnutrition that exacerbate health challenges and reinforce the cycle of poverty.

In 2020-21, with support from the Overseas Aid & Development Commission, States of Guernsey, Pragma has been working to enable access to safe water for drinking and household use, as well as providing high quality and locally-appropriate sanitation solutions, to 5000 people across 10 river island communities in

the two districts of Munshiganj and Narayanganj, Dhaka division, Bangladesh. Key activities and achievements during the year include:

- ✓ A WASH awareness campaign was designed and delivered. The campaigns aim to effect positive behavioural change with respect to household water use, sanitation, and family hygiene. Following community consultations, the campaign design was adapted to local norms and cultural practices, addressing current community WASH challenges. Campaign content, oriented as appropriate to children and adults, covered key themes including preventative health behaviours and handwashing (including with respect to Covid-19 mitigation strategies), hygienic household waste management, flood-specific WASH, proper toilet usage, and menstrual hygiene. Employing a mixed media approach, campaigning was successfully conducted in Munshiganj district, engaging 100 participants in Covid-19-adapted sessions, with further campaigning planned for Narayanganj district in 2021-22.
- ✓ Flood-appropriate toilet designs developed, and toilets constructed. The Pragma team researched toilet designs appropriate to the flood-prone context and accounting for local culture, developing toilet designs on raised platforms with accessibility measures for persons with disabilities. Pragma subsequently facilitated construction of five twin male / female toilet blocks across communities in both project districts, with more such facilities to be constructed going into April 2021.
- ✓ Context-appropriate water filtration technologies explored. The technology deployed through the project needed to be capable of removing arsenic and common waterborne diseases whilst maintaining safe water PH, with significant filtration capacity (water volume). The selected technology also needed to function without electricity, be robust and need little or no maintenance, and represent value for money. Based on these parameters, Pragma conducted extensive research on appropriate water-filtration technology, finally selecting the innovative and award-winning SONO filter, which uses a composite iron matrix design, and appropriate suppliers were identified.
- ✓ Developing guidelines for community WASH management in emergencies. The project supported Pragma to develop a framework for community WASH management customised to a context of recurrent flooding. A workshop was designed, which will empower the target communities for disaster risk reduction in relation to WASH infrastructure and educate them in managing WASH installations during emergencies.
- ✓ Designing a training for enhanced institutional management of WASH in emergencies. Complementing the capacity building among community members, Pragma also designed a training for frontline workers, government officials and local NGOs on WASH technologies suitable to flood-prone contexts as well as institutional roles and responsibilities towards disaster risk reduction, WASH infrastructure management, and approaches to disease control during floods. Following local consultation, Pragma conducted preliminary selection of institutional representatives for participation in the trainings.



Hygiene promotion poster produced by Pragma as part of the Char WASH awareness campaigns

In late 2020, Pragma secured further generous support from the Allan and Nesta Ferguson Charitable Trust to expand this critical work to more char residents desperately in need of WASH support. The project, as supported by both donors, continues into 2021-22, and aims to achieve a 25% reduction in waterborne disease and a 30% reduction in open defecation in target communities, whilst building capacity for local wash management.

### *Developing a peer support-based approach to maternal and reproductive healthcare in northern Kenya*

In the Arid/Semi-Arid Lands (ASAL) of northern Kenya, communities suffer appalling maternal and infant mortality rates. Earlier in-depth research conducted by Pragma and funded by Comic Relief highlighted how this situation is driven by a combination of factors including poverty and marginalisation, extremely poor local availability of health clinics, mistrust among communities concerning state healthcare, and entrenched cultural norms that see pregnant women more likely to rely on their peers for pre- and post-natal support.

Based on its research findings, Pragma developed a model for peer-led Maternal and Reproductive Health (MRH) support for the ASALs that leverages local strengths and addresses root causes of the problem.

Pragma's model comprises three pillars of support:

- **Pillar 1 - Support Networks & Capacity Building.** The model develops networks of women's peer support groups anchored by Community Health Workers, which provide health surveillance, diagnosis and referral services to their communities using simple toolkits, and promote awareness of issues related to maternal and reproductive health via health information Kiosks. This pillar also empowers women leaders to advocate for health sector reforms to improve maternal and child health in remote and marginalised areas.
- **Pillar 2 - Social & Behavioural Change.** This pillar includes culturally sensitive campaigns promoting sexual and reproductive health rights towards ending violence against women and girls; campaign design leverages community elders, local arts and mass media, and also has a focus on men and boys towards reducing risky and harmful sexual behaviours. The model empowers women leaders to educate adolescent girls, pregnant women and new mothers on preventative and promotive healthcare. Health programmes for schools promote awareness and sensitivity around reproductive health for adolescent girls and boys, towards improved personal hygiene and reduced anxiety boosting school attendance.
- **Pillar 3 - Addressing malnutrition.** CHWs and other women leaders are empowered to act as 'barefoot nutritionists' for their communities, conducting Hunger & Nutrition Watch schemes using basic nutrition surveillance toolkits. Education programmes for women promote proper family diet planning, in combination with training in Nutrient-Dense Farming methodology for the development of kitchen gardens enabling diversified and nutritionally enriched household diets, whilst communities at large are supported to develop communal nutri-farms to tackle seasonal food insecurity. Children and adolescents are also engaged through educational programmes and school nutri-gardens that help foster the next generation of nutri-champions and ensure school meals serve up healthy, nutritious food for an energised and engaged leaning environment.

The programme aims to: improve access to MRH support in Kenya's ASALs; Enhance capacity of local stakeholders to address MRH issues; Enhance awareness in ASAL communities of issues and challenges related to MRH; and build capacity for community-anchored nutrition management. The programme's mid-term vision is improved maternal and reproductive health for approximately 0.6 million women and girls in the 3 ASAL counties of Turkana, Laikipia and Samburu, with a longer term vision of expanding the programme and its benefits to Kenya's 29 ASAL counties.

In 2020-21, Pragma explored avenues to launching the programme with potential donors, with a view to securing partnerships to launch the programme in 2021-22.

## **5. Disaster management**

### *COVID-19 Response, India*

India has been one of the worst-hit countries in the world by COVID-19. Entrenched socioeconomic disparities have meant vastly unequal access to healthcare and other support, with large populations rendered especially vulnerable through poverty and discrimination. For India's poor and marginalised, in both rural and urban areas, the recommended non-pharmaceutical COVID-19 basic prevention actions are simply not achievable. Social distancing has been impossible for millions of people, resulting in

rampant spread of the virus and one of the world's highest infection rates. Inadequate or complete absence of sanitation facilities in urban slums and neglected rural areas has meant little or no handwashing among these populations. Many have lacked access to basic PPE such as face masks, including frontline health workers. Information about basic personal protection measures failed to reach poorer populations in the first place, and disinformation about COVID-19 has resulted in of certain people. Among India's poor, malnourishment and chronic morbidity are commonplace and substantially heighten vulnerability to the virus, a situation exacerbated by lockdowns and associated inability to access food and healthcare.

Unemployment surged across India, proving catastrophic for poorer populations least resilient to economic shocks; many of India's urban poor are migrant workers surviving hand to mouth as daily wage labourers, where job losses left many facing starvation and compelled mass return to rural

Pragya began responding to the needs of the communities we work with, in rural and urban locations in India, in March 2020. We launched our work with a focus on relief for the migrant workers who had been left without any source of income and facing hunger and starvation during the lockdown, and with support for the health workers who were delivering a heroic service by testing, tracing, treating or managing quarantines. As the pandemic progressed through 2020-21, we conducted a thorough analysis of the developing trajectory and the hotspots in terms of groups and locations with disproportionately high vulnerability to the infection and to its fallouts as well as the nature of the impacts, both in rural and urban India. This helped us shape a comprehensive Response Strategy, which continued to be informed by the development of the pandemic and its impacts.



*Food and hygiene relief in Bihar – distributed by Pragya in the earlier stages of the pandemic to those in need*

The Response Strategy that Pragya developed combines three pillars of support:

- **Pillar 1 - Prevention of spread of COVID-19 among urban and rural poor:** Measures comprise: awareness raising among at-risk populations, along with support for protective gear and hygiene facilities, towards helping reduce the Reproduction Number and flattening the epidemiological curve; in turn, reducing morbidity, mortality and thereby the economic shock, particularly for the poor and vulnerable.
- **Pillar 2- Supporting health workers and medical facilities to respond effectively and safely:** Measures comprise providing personal protective equipment to health workers, educative capsules on COVID-associated protection and containment measures, and psychological support to health workers; and necessary supplies and equipment to health centres, towards helping reduce the risks and pain that health workers are exposed to, while also enhancing the capacity of the healthcare system to respond effectively and control and mitigate the crisis.
- **Pillar 3 - Humanitarian relief and supporting the economic resilience of rural and urban poor through the pandemic and after it:** Measures comprise support for immediate relief and rehabilitating livelihoods to those rendered out-of-work to help reduce the distress of the poor and vulnerable and their vulnerability to the disease and enhance their resilience.

With generous emergency funding provided by close supporters, Pragma was able to mount a substantial COVID-19 Response in 2020-21. We initially prioritised five districts in three States / Union Territories for the Response on the basis of the caseload: Araria and Madhepura in Bihar; Dungarpur and Udaipur in Rajasthan; Leh in Union Territory of Ladakh. Slums and periurban colonies in NCR-Delhi were also prioritised for intervention. For supporting agricultural livelihoods however, other states and districts, were also covered. Key activities and achievements during the year included:

*Pillar 1 - Prevention of spread of COVID-19 among urban & rural poor:*

- ✓ Communication campaigns directly targeting individuals and involving text messages, videos, audios, had an outreach to nearly 60,000 people across rural areas and urban slums. Content included COVID-appropriate behaviours, symptoms recognition, and promotion of local Helpline numbers (both government and Pragma numbers).
- ✓ Areas of common use were identified in target areas, and posters put up at these on subjects including: COVID-19 symptoms, measures for protection from COVID-19, and support to healthcare workers. Sites have included grocery stores, schools, Community Centres, medical stores, village creches, etc., in villages; and hand wash stations, toilets and bathrooms, and stalls (Goomties) in urban slums. These have had an estimated outreach to 120,000+ people in villages and 16,000+ people in the urban slums.



*Pragma's awareness campaigns include engaging children as young advocates to help spread awareness in the communities of the importance of handwashing and other behaviours to help curb the transmission of COVID-19*

- ✓ Awareness sessions were conducted to educate key influencers across target communities, including members of Village Health & Sanitation Committees and Village Councils in rural areas, and slum leaders/caretakers in the urban slums. These sessions educated the participants, countered disinformation, and motivated them to act as catalysts to contain the spread of COVID-19 through suitable measures, and enabled them to further disseminate the public awareness information among their communities. 206 such sessions have been conducted reaching nearly 2000 key influencers.
- ✓ Detailed educative leaflets were developed with information on COVID-19 do's and don't's, ways to control the spread in communities, and on promoting mental health, and these have been distributed to the key influencers for reference in their decision-making on containment measures, quarantining, liaising with government health authorities, etc.
- ✓ In coordination with the Municipal Commissioner Gurugram, 10 community hand-wash stations have been installed in five slum colonies; these facilities are foot-pedal operated water, with liquid soap dispensers and are thus touch-free. The 10 installed facilities are serving slum colonies with 9660 people, directly benefiting about 3000 users on a daily basis. A 5-member Observation & Maintenance Committee has



*A foot pedal operated handwash station installed by Pragma*

been formed at each of the locations comprising slum colony residents to ensure community ownership.

- ✓ Awareness campaigns are also organised on a regular basis at the slum colonies, with COVID-19 education being provided in small groups and posters were placed at the entrance of the slum colonies; community members are facilitated for Hand hygiene group pledges.

#### *Pillar 2 - Supporting health workers and medical facilities to respond effectively and safely*

- ✓ An educative programme with essential inputs with respect to COVID-19 for health workers was developed in collaboration with Dr. Sanjeev Singh, Senior Health Advisor, Max Hospital, Gurugram. The programme comprises modules on Infection Prevention and Control, and Disease Surveillance and Response. The programme is being delivered by Dr. Singh to the community health workers in target areas via short teleconferences for batches of 100 health workers per sessions, and include delivery of the educative content followed by Q&As. A total of nearly 1000 community healthcare workers have thus far been educated via these sessions.
- ✓ The community health workers have also been provided with COVID-19 related educative content in the form of leaflets for referring to, and in order to ensure retention of the educational content.
- ✓ A series of psychological health sessions for frontline health workers has been developed in collaboration with the National Institute of Mental Health & Neuro Sciences (NIMHANS). Two experts from NIMHANS (Dr. Kavita V. Jangam and Dr. Shreedevi A U) have conducted multiple sessions and covered a total of nearly 1000 community health workers through these sessions. The NIMHANS Helpline has also been made accessible to these health workers to reach out to in case of queries or need for support.
- ✓ The particularly hard-hit and under-resourced District Administration are being provided support periodically for their requirement for masks, gloves, sanitizers, thermal scanners, PPE suits, etc. Masks, gloves, PPE suits, sanitiser bottles, sanitizer machine, thermal scanners as well as books and IEC material on COVID-19, have been provided to the District Administration in our target districts, as per requests received.

#### *Pillar 3 - Humanitarian relief and supporting the economic resilience of rural & urban poor*

- ✓ Planting material was provided to in the form of saplings for high-value cash crops to 157 farmers in Rajasthan and 942 farmers in Uttarakhand, along with instructions on associated cultivation protocols, as well as information on buyers for the harvests; 250 farmers in Assam and 250 in Bihar were also supported with seeds/saplings of high-value cash crops. This will benefit a total of nearly 8000 people in these states.
- ✓ Ten women's SHGs have been supported for undertaking mask-making in the target districts. Multiple rounds of training on mask-making has been provided to each of these SHGs with a total 174 participants.
- ✓ The SHGs have been provided with sewing kits and the first tranche of raw material and 2000+ masks have been produced to date. Linkages with pharmacies and retail stores for mask sales have been set-up for the SHGs in each of the 5 districts in which the SHGs have been assisted in this manner. While the initial batches of production were used by the communities themselves, sale of the products to local outlets has started. Apart from protecting the local communities through the use of masks, this intervention will help institutionalise this practice, and also provide incomes to the women.
- ✓ A livelihood needs assessment survey was conducted in the 5 slum colonies in Gurugram in which we have been delivering our Response. The findings indicate that incomes of the urban poor households have been severely affected by the pandemic (reduced to under 10% of pre-lockdown levels during the lockdown and restored only to 35% after opening up). A package of assistance was designed comprising components in two



*Training for a women's SHG in mask making. The initiative serves the dual purpose of ensuring local supply of PPE, whilst providing income support*

categories- protective material (screen) for adaptation, and direct livelihoods support particularly for those who have to rehabilitate in some alternative livelihood.

Pragya’s Covid-19 Response continues into 2021-22 as the pandemic progresses, with activities amended in response to the changing situation.

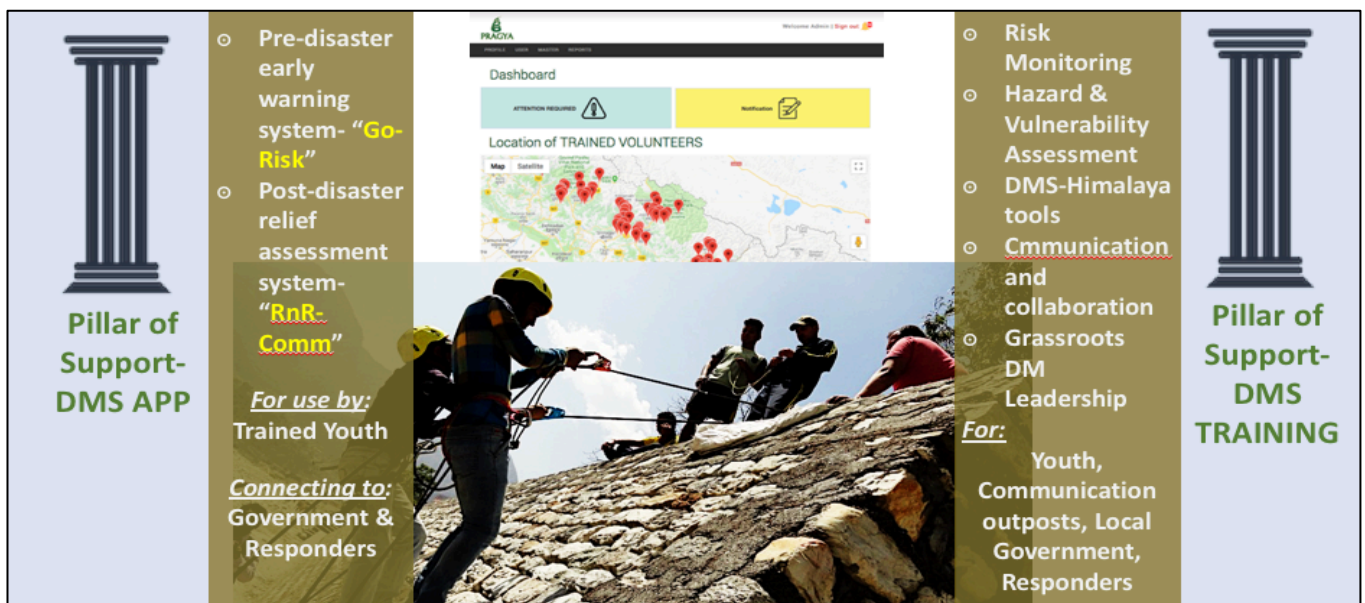
DMS-Himalaya - Strengthening disaster preparedness in the Indian Himalayas

The Himalayan region is extremely disaster-prone and subject to multiple types of hazards including flash flooding, landslides and glacier collapse, earthquakes, and forest fires. Global warming is having a disproportionate impact on the region, with warming at up to three times the global average, driving ever more erratic weather events, disrupting monsoon patterns and exacerbating the frequency and intensity of disasters. The populations affected are remote and marginalised communities that have little disaster resilience, whilst government disaster management authorities are hampered by lack of incident information and geographic constraints.

Pragya has pioneered the DMS-Himalaya – an information and capacity building toolkit that enables remote Himalayan communities to reduce their disaster risk and to respond effectively in disaster scenarios. It reimagines the accepted (but ineffective) roles for disaster management, building capacity at every point in the disaster management chain and networking communities, responders and government, fostering a collaborative community-state approach to disaster management, supported by appropriate technology.

The DMS-Himalaya model comprises:

- **A DMS Himalaya App.** This comprises *GoRisk*, a citizen-science framework for disaster early warning towards evasive action; and *RnR-Comm*, a post-disaster relief assessment and data relay apparatus for community use for efficient and effective post-disaster response.
- **DMS Himalaya training and capacity building.** Includes local risk monitoring, conducting village level hazard mapping and preparatory drills, training youth-led Disaster Response Teams (DRT), as well as developing a disaster-specific communications network connecting all disaster management stakeholders from last mile communities through to government disaster management agencies.



Following a highly successful four-year DMS-Himalaya pilot project that culminated in 2019-20 and spanned 800 villages in the north Indian state of Uttarakhand, in 2020-21 Pragya commenced an ambitious scale up that will see DMS-Himalaya implemented in multiple Himalayan states across three zones in the Indian Himalayan Region. This will generate evidence of the model’s adaptability to differing climatic contexts and help further propel its uptake across the region and its integration with local government disaster management processes. Highlights from the year include:

- ✓ Refresher trainings were conducted for 80 DRTs in Uttarakhand with inputs on disasters, Disaster Management, DMS-Himalaya project aspects, the DMS App, and on community mobilisation and education with regard to Disaster Management. The trainings aimed to enhance the DRTs’ performance in their respective cluster.

- ✓ A broadcast through All India Radio conveyed Information on various natural hazards. The relay covered the 4 pilot project districts in Uttarakhand, with an estimated outreach to half a million of the total 1.4 million population of the 4 districts.
- ✓ 80 community level Disaster Preparedness Committees were formed in the four pilot districts in Uttarakhand towards enhancing community focus on and responsibility for mitigation and preparedness actions to address specific hazards and vulnerability. The Committees are intended to work alongside the DRTs for facilitating grassroot-level preparedness interventions. Multiple orientation meetings were conducted with the members of all committees.
- ✓ Enhanced Disaster Management Kits for the DRTs were designed. These Kits include essential items for DRTs to use in emergency / disaster response. Pragma identified several products as kit components, spanning search & rescue, survival, personal protection and other operational components.
- ✓ Leadership development training modules were in development during the year, which include customised modules for children, women, DRTs, village councils and development actors.
- ✓ Expansion of DMS-Himalaya into highly vulnerable parts of two new Himalayan zones (Eastern and Western) began. This included beneficiary engagement in new districts, and selection and orientation of DRT leaders. Village-level Hazard, Vulnerability and Capability Assessments began in the new zones, which evaluated vulnerable locations and safety zones in target villages, mapped evacuation routes and available resources / infrastructure, and prepared the hazard calendars for target villages. "Go-Risk" monitoring sites were identified for environmental monitoring to facilitate early warning. Collation of district-level Resource Directories also began, which will serve as a storehouse of information on disaster responder agencies, resources and local networks to aid in disaster preparedness and response.

The scale goal through to 2022-23 is to extend the innovation's impact to 900,000 people across 12 local authorities in India – saving livelihoods, saving lives. This project is made possible through the generosity of Pragma's major supporters. In particular, DMS-Himalaya is funded and supported by Elrha's Humanitarian Innovation Fund (HIF), a programme which improves outcomes for people affected by humanitarian crises by identifying, nurturing, and sharing more effective and scalable solutions. This project is funded and support by the HIF as part of its work on scaling innovation. Elrha's HIF is funded by aid from the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Elrha is a global charity that finds solutions to complex humanitarian problems through research and innovation. Visit [www.elrha.org](http://www.elrha.org) to find out more.

### Case Study

#### **Tanga Village, Pithoragarh District, Uttarakhand - Early warning and emergency response**

**Event:** On 19<sup>th</sup> of July 2020 due to heavy rainfall, there were multiple occurrences of cloudburst induced flash flood and landslides in the Munsiyari block of Pithoragarh district. It was only the next morning that the true extent of devastation was realised. There were multiple points from Jauljivi to Munsiyari where bridges had collapsed due to cloudburst induced flash flood and roads were blocked due to debris flow.

**Response:** On 20<sup>th</sup> of July at around 9 am, Pithoragarh District Disaster Management Support Unit (DDMSU) was informed by the DRT Leader of Rapti cluster, Mr. Harish, about the disaster in Munsiyari block. Following sharing the information, Mr. Harish went to the disaster site to assess the situation. After reaching the site, he immediately reported the incident through two mediums - 1<sup>st</sup> was through phone call and 2<sup>nd</sup> through the DMS-Himalaya App. Once Pithoragarh DDMSU received the information from the DRT Leader, it was immediately forwarded to the District Disaster Management Officer of Pithoragarh. All DRTs throughout the district were accordingly put on high alert. Simultaneously, DRT Leader Harish was instructed to do a preliminary need assessment of the disaster who then focused on 2 villages which were severely affected - Tanga of Tanga cluster and Gaila Malla of Ranthi cluster.

Based on the information shared by Harish on relief requirements, Pithoragarh DDMSU were able to initiate the process of Disaster Response for Tanga village. DRT Leader Harish not just reported the incident but was also an active participant in the Disaster Response which was carried out by the community.

## 4. Advocacy work

Pragma promotes awareness among the international development community and the general public about the needs of remote and marginalised communities living on the fringes of society, and about Pragma's commitment to reducing and eliminating marginalisation of affected populations, whatever its

form. Towards this, Pragma participates in various forums and exhibits its work at conferences and events, in addition to publishing our research on certain issues and the impacts of our approaches.

In 2020-21, COVID-19 severely restricted our normal in-person advocacy work. We did, however, have occasion to participate in online events. For example, as the pandemic gathered pace in the UK, Pragma participated in an online forum hosted by Philanthropy for Social Justice and Peace, that brought together NGOs from around the world to explore how philanthropy can strengthen communities in the face of COVID-19 and how we might build back better in a post-COVID-19 world. The forum addressed questions such as “What does it take to build resilience in our communities and our organisations? How do we build a resilient, vibrant and strong civil society?”. 2021-21 may see follow up forums on this theme of resilience. Pragma also attended the online event ‘Poverty monitoring in the context of COVID-19’ hosted by the Overseas Development Institute, that sought to explore the impacts of COVID-19 and associated policy changes on the world’s poorest people, and how to prevent impoverishment, hunger and destitution in the context of the virus. Pragma intends to recommence in-person advocacy and outreach engagements in 2021-22, situation permitting.

Pragma maintained its membership of the BOND network in 2020-21, and continued to engage online as a member of the community at the Foundry Social Justice and Human Rights Centre. We also promoted our work via our website and social media platforms.

## 5. Partner organisations

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Pragma UK is part of a network of locally-registered Pragma organisations around the world with a common purpose and vision. The UK branch of Pragma is primarily a fundraising, communications and project management function, we do not have staff based overseas. Instead, to implement our programmes we work in partnership with our global sister organisations and where appropriate we leverage the expertise of experienced and carefully vetted third party NGOs with whom we have long-established MOUs. This set-up ensures our work is delivered by staff with a depth of knowledge and experience concerning the local context, whilst contributing to local labour markets.

In India, Pragma UK delivers its projects in partnership with Pragma India; founded in 1995, Pragma India is headquartered in Gurugram and operates across western, northern and eastern India via an extensive network of field offices. Pragma India has a substantial research and advocacy function, and delivers a wide variety of projects across the full breadth of Pragma programme areas, with substantial resources dedicated to COVID-19 Response in 2020-21.

Pragma UK has worked with Pragma in Nepal since 2006; based in Kathmandu, they coordinate the delivery of projects across rural districts, harnessing the highly localised expertise of NGOs situated in the vicinity of project sites. Since 2015, Pragma’s work in Nepal has focussed on various aspects of rehabilitation in communities deeply impacted by the earthquake, and lately where this now intersects with the impacts of COVID-19.

Pragma UK began delivering projects in Bangladesh in 2018. Based in Dhaka, Pragma in Bangladesh works in partnership with Pragma UK and in-country NGOs to improve the desperate situation of river island communities facing multiple severe challenges. Following research and pilot work in 2018-19, Pragma secured grant funding in 2019-20 to launch its Bangladesh programmes, beginning with WASH interventions continuing in 2020-21 but with wider programming also planned across disaster management, livelihoods, prevention of trafficking and violence against women, and education.

In east Africa, Pragma UK works with Pragma Kenya, an NGO founded in 2011 and based in Nairobi and delivering projects in tandem with selected localised NGOs in Kakamega county in western Kenya, as well as in the northern Arid and Semi-Arid counties. Pragma Kenya are experienced in conducting research and development interventions encompassing water and sanitation, agriculture and livelihoods, healthcare, education, and inter-community conflict.

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Thank you to all our supporters without whose generosity and vision our vital work would not be possible.



**PRAGYA**

*Development without Destruction  
Empowerment for Enabling Choices*

**FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021**

**REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS**

<b>Company number</b>	N.A.
<b>Charity number</b>	1082476
<b>Registered office</b>	The Foundry 17 Oval Way London SE11 5RR
<b>Trustees</b>	Gargi Banerji - Chairperson Arasan Aruliah Pratap Rughani
<b>Bankers</b>	HSBC 176 Camden High Street London NW1 8QL
<b>Solicitors</b>	N.A.

**C O N T E N T S**

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## **TRUSTEES' REPORT**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Trustees are pleased to present their Report and financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2021.

Reference and administrative information is set out on page 1 and forms part of this report. The financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the Companies Act 2006, the Memorandum and Articles of Association, and Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard for Smaller Entities.

### **STATUS AND GOVERNING DOCUMENT**

PRAGYA was registered as a charity on 20<sup>th</sup> October 2000.

#### **Charitable Objects**

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The objects of the charity are:

- i. to stimulate development in vulnerable and neglected communities, particularly in mountain systems and other ecologically fragile areas, enabling and empowering them through the use of appropriate technologies, traditional knowledge and indigenous solutions;
- ii. to encourage improved natural resource management, and conservation and sustainable utilisation of the natural and cultural heritage in sensitive ecosystems and communities;
- iii. to institute alternative, sustainable development forms in mountain systems and other ecologically fragile and pristine areas, through development action and policy change;
- iv. to conduct research in the development sciences with special reference to the target areas and groups (as above), develop appropriate models/products/tools/techniques, and document, publish and exchange the learnings acquired;
- v. to raise funds to support activities towards meeting the above objectives of the Charity.

### **TRUSTEES**

Trustees serving during the year and up to the date of this report were as follows:

Mr. Arasan Aruliah  
4, Middleton Grove  
London N7 9LU

Ms. Gargi Banerji - Chair  
102, Tower 4, The Palms, Sector 30  
Gurgaon - 122001, India

Mr. Pratap Rughani  
22, Sugar Loaf Walk  
Bethnal Green  
London E2 OJQ

## **STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

The Trustee Board meets two times a year.

### **Internal Control, Management and Risk Review**

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Governance activities include maintaining ongoing controls and procedures to ensure effective stewardship of financial and other resources, and monitoring of annual objectives against an agreed strategic and business plan for the organisation. The Trustee Board receives regular reports from management staff and conducts an in-depth review at least twice a year. This review includes an assessment of key internal and external factors affecting the achievement of the charity's general and specific objectives – and forms the basis of agreed updates and amendments to the strategic plan.

The systems of internal control are designed to provide reasonable, but not absolute, assurance against material misstatement or loss. They include:

- A strategic plan and an annual budget approved by the trustees;
- Regular consideration by the trustees of financial results, variance from budgets, non-financial performance indicators and benchmarking reviews;
- Delegation of authority and segregation of duties, and identification and management of risks.

The trustees are pleased to report that the charity's internal financial controls, in particular, conform to guidelines issued by the Charity Commission. The trustees have reviewed risks and are satisfied that appropriate mitigating controls and actions are in place.

## **CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES**

### **Beneficiaries**

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The primary beneficiaries of the charity include the disadvantaged communities living and/or working in Bangladesh, India, Kenya and Nepal. In addition, the wider public, policymakers and others that can influence and bring about a positive change in the condition of the primary beneficiaries are also targeted by the charity through its interventions.

### **Objectives**

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The objectives of the charity include:

- i. Build the capacity of marginalised and disadvantaged communities to access their rights and achieve their own development goals.
- ii. Enhance the economic and livelihood opportunities available to disadvantaged communities.
- iii. Support vulnerable and disadvantaged communities to conserve and utilize their surrounding ecosystem in an environmentally and socially sustainable manner.
- iv. Conserve and promote traditional culture and knowledge.
- v. Utilize this traditional knowledge alongside new technology to improve the management of natural resources in the ecologically sensitive areas.
- vi. Advocate within the UK and internationally on the importance of supporting community-led development and environmental conservation.

Our objectives are achieved through:

- Mobilising resources and providing knowledge and monitoring inputs for projects being implemented by partners in disadvantaged regions.
- Documenting needs of communities and project learnings and sharing with stakeholders and the development community in the UK.
- Participating in various fora and networking for developing wider awareness and building a support base for target issues/region in the UK.

## **FINANCIAL REVIEW**

Our key financial objectives were to secure funding for current services and to increase our unrestricted reserves to expand and develop new areas of work. We were successful in enhancing resources for existing programmes as well as in scaling up new areas of work.

Total incoming resources for the year were £528,781 (2020 - £50,804); total expenditure was £396,997 (2020 - £123,063). A breakdown of expenditure by activity areas is on Statement of financial Activities (page 9).

Total funds during the year increased by £131,784 (2020 – Deficit of £72,259), bringing the funds carried forward to £132,141 (2020 - £357).

### **Reserves Policy and Going Concern**

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Reserves are needed to bridge the gap between the spending and receiving of income and to cover unplanned emergency repairs and other expenditure. The trustees consider that the ideal level of unrestricted reserves as at 31 March 2021 would be at a level sufficient to cover three months' expenditure, i.e. £15,000. The Trustees have reviewed the circumstances of the charity and consider that adequate resources continue to be available to fund the activities of the Charity for the foreseeable future. The trustees are of the view that Charity are a going concern.

## **STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES**

The charity trustees are responsible for preparing a trustees' annual report and financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Charity law requires Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year, which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income or expenditure, of the charitable company for that period.

In preparing these accounts, the Trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP
- make judgements and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the company will continue in business

The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper and adequate accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities. The trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the charitable company's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

**PUBLIC BENEFIT STATEMENT**

The Trustees confirm that they have complied with the duty in section 4 of the Charities Act 2006 to have due regard to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit, '*charities and public benefit*'.

Pragya's charitable purpose is enshrined in its objects - to support and develop the disadvantaged communities living and/or working in the underserved regions. The Trustees ensure that this is carried out for the public benefit by delivering programmes and services that are of value to the participants of the projects. The participants are members of the public known to and/or identified by Partner organisations (e.g. NGO's, Local Authorities, Aid Agencies) with whom and for whom Pragya develops the projects. These partnerships ensure that Pragya's activities reach the right recipients and thus fulfil the charities core objectives.

Approved by the Board on 28/5/21 and signed on their behalf by:



Gargi Banerji  
Chairperson

Date: 28 May, 2021

## **REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT EXAMINER TO THE TRUSTEES OF PRAGYA**

We report on the accounts of the company for the year ended 31 March 2021, which are set out on pages 9 to 14.

### **RESPECTIVE RESPONSIBILITIES OF TRUSTEES AND EXAMINER**

The trustees (who are also the directors of the company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed. The charity is required by company law to prepare accrued accounts and I am qualified to undertake the examination by being a qualified member of CIPFA.

Having satisfied myself that the charity is not subject to audit under company law and is eligible for independent examination, it is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act;
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act; and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

### **BASIS OF INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT**

Our examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

### **INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S STATEMENT**

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

- i. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:
  - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 386 of the Companies Act 2006; and
  - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records, comply with the accounting requirements of the Companies Act 2006 and with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities have not been met; or
- ii. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



Andi Dollia, CPFA  
Additude Ltd  
9 Rhapsody Court  
Wakeman Road  
London NW10 5DF

Date: *28 May 2021*

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES**  
**(Incorporating income and expenditure account)**

	Note	Restricted (£)	Unrestricted (£)	2021 Total (£)	2020 Total (£)
<b>Income from:</b>					
Donations and legacies	2	518,881	9,900	<b>528,781</b>	50,804
Charitable activities		-	-	-	-
Investment and other income		-	-	-	-
<b>Total (Total Income)</b>		<b>518,881</b>	<b>9,900</b>	<b>528,781</b>	50,804
<b>Expenditure on:</b>	3				
Raising funds		24,645	-	<b>24,645</b>	20,772
Charitable activities		368,524	3,828	<b>372,352</b>	102,291
Other		-	-	-	-
<b>Total (Total Expenditure)</b>		<b>393,169</b>	<b>3,828</b>	<b>396,997</b>	123,063
<b>Net gains/(losses) on investments</b>		-	-	-	-
<b>Net income/(expenditure)</b>	4	<b>125,712</b>	<b>6,072</b>	<b>131,784</b>	(72,259)
<b>Transfer between funds</b>		-	-	-	-
<b>Other recognised gains/(losses)</b>		-	-	-	-
<b>Net movement in funds</b>		<b>125,712</b>	<b>6,072</b>	<b>131,784</b>	(72,259)
<b>Reconciliation of funds:</b>					
<b>Total funds brought forward</b>		-	357	<b>357</b>	72,616
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>		<b>125,712</b>	<b>6,429</b>	<b>132,141</b>	357

All of the above results are derived from continuing activities. There were no other recognised gains or losses other than those stated above. Movements in funds are disclosed in Note 9 to the financial statements.

**BALANCE SHEET**

	Note	2021(£)	2020(£)
<b>Fixed Assets</b>			
Tangible fixed assets		-	-
<b>Current Assets</b>			
Debtors		-	-
Cash at bank		140,275	8,218
<b>Total Current Assets</b>		140,275	8,218
<b>Current Liabilities</b>			
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	7	8,134	7,861
<b>Net current assets</b>		132,141	357
<b>Net assets</b>	8	132,141	357
<b>Funds</b>	9		
Restricted		125,712	-
General		6,429	357
<b>Total funds</b>		132,141	357

For the year ended 31 March 2021 the company was entitled to exemption under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006; and no notice has been deposited under section 476. No members have required the company to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year in question. The directors acknowledge responsibility for: i) Ensuring the company keeps accounting records which comply with section 386; and ii) Preparing financial statements which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the company as at the end of its profit and loss for the financial year in accordance with requirements of section 394 and 395, and which otherwise comply with requirements of the Companies Act 2006 relating to financial statements, so far applicable to the company. These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime.

Approved by the trustees on 28 May, 2021 and signed on their behalf by:

Gargi Banerji  
Chairperson

Date: 28 May, 2021

The accompanying accounting policies and notes form part of these financial statements.

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS****1. Accounting policies**

- a. The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention and in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standards for Small Entities (April 2008) and the Companies Act 2006. They follow the recommendations in the Statement of Recommended Practice, Accounting and Reporting by Charities (issued in March 2005).
- b. Voluntary income is received by way of donations and gifts and is included in full in the statement of financial activities when receivable. Volunteer time is not included in the financial statements.
- c. Grants are recognized in full in the statement of financial activities in the year in which they are receivable.
- d. Resources expended are recognized in the period in which they are incurred. Resources expended include attributable VAT which cannot be recovered.
- e. Depreciation is provided at rates calculated on a straight-line basis to write down the cost of each asset to its estimated residual value over its expected useful life of 3 years.
- f. Restricted funds are to be used for specific purposes as laid down by the donor. Expenditure which meets these criteria is charged to the fund together with a fair allocation of management and support costs.
- g. Unrestricted funds are donations and other incoming resources receivable or generated for the objects of the charity.
- h. The costs of raising funds relate to the costs incurred by the charitable company in raising funds for the charitable work.

**2. Donations and legacies**

	2021			2020
	Restricted (£)	Unrestricted (£)	Total (£)	Total (£)
Allan and Nesta Ferguson Charitable Trust	20,000	-	20,000	-
Balbir Chowdhary	-	3,200	3,200	4,000
Elrha	142,946	-	142,946	-
Ernest Kleinwort Charitable Trust	-	-	-	4,000
Guernsey Overseas Aid & Development Commission	23,729	-	23,729	19,355
Harbinson Charitable Trust	-	1,400	1,400	1,500
Other Trusts and foundations	313,617	5,300	318,917	949
Souter Charitable Trust	-	-	-	2,000
The Evan Cornish Foundation	-	-	-	9,000
The Margaret Hayman Charitable Trust Fund	15,589	-	15,589	-
The Peter Stebbings Memorial Charity	-	-	-	10,000
W F Southall Trust	3,000	-	3,000	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>518,881</b>	<b>9,900</b>	<b>528,781</b>	<b>50,804</b>

**3. Total Expenditure**

<b>Expenditure</b>	Cost of raising funds (£)	Cost of charitable activities (£)	Support Costs (£)	<b>2021 Total (£)</b>	2020 Total (£)
Staff costs (note 5)	14,610	29,221	14,610	58,441	45,849
Rent, insurance, utilities, services	-	-	10,037	10,037	11,109
Bank Charges	-	-	1,036	1,036	448
Postage and telephone	-	-	140	140	854
Travelling Expenses	-	-	-	-	348
Membership Subscriptions	-	-	1,144	1,144	2,108
Independent Examination	-	-	1,000	1,000	975
Consultancy fees	-	-	2,138	2,138	600
Direct project expenses	-	323,061	-	323,061	60,747
Volunteer Expenses	-	-	-	-	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>14,610</b>	<b>352,282</b>	<b>30,105</b>	<b>396,997</b>	123,063
Add: allocation of support costs	10,035	20,070	(30,105)	-	-
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>24,645</b>	<b>372,352</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>396,997</b>	123,063

**4. Net income/(expenditure) for the year**

This is stated after charging / crediting:	<b>2021 (£)</b>	2020 (£)
Depreciation	-	-
Trustees' remuneration	-	-
Trustees' reimbursed expenses	-	-
Independent Examiner's remuneration	<b>1,000</b>	975

**5. Staff costs and numbers**

Staff costs were as follows:	2021 (£)	2020 (£)
Salaries and wages	57,000	44,751
Social security costs	1,441	1,098
Pension contributions	-	-
Total emoluments paid to employees were:	58,441	45,849
No employee earned more than £60,000 during the year (2020 - 0)		
The average weekly number of staff (expressed as full-time equivalents) during the year was 1.8 (2020: 2.0)		
	2021 (FTE)	2020 (FTE)
Raising funds	0.5	0.5
Charitable activities	1.0	1.0
Support costs	0.3	0.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>2.0</b>

**6. Taxation**

The charitable company is exempt from corporation tax as all its income is charitable and is applied for charitable purposes.

**7. Creditors: amounts due within 1 year**

	2021 (£)	2020 (£)
Trade Creditors	1,134	1,354
Other Creditors	5,700	5,232
Independent Examination	1,000	975
Accruals and Provisions	300	300
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,134</b>	<b>7,861</b>

**8. Analysis of net assets between funds**

	Restricted Funds (£)	General funds (£)	Total funds (£)
Tangible fixed assets	-	-	-
Net current assets	125,712	6,429	132,141
<b>Net assets at the end of the year</b>	<b>125,712</b>	<b>6,429</b>	<b>132,141</b>

**9. Movements in Fund**

	At the start of the year (£)	Incoming resources (£)	Outgoing resources (£)	Transfers (£)	At the end of the year (£)
<b>Unrestricted funds:</b>					
General funds	357	9,900	3,828	-	6,429
<b>Total unrestricted funds</b>	<b>357</b>	<b>9,900</b>	<b>3,828</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>6,429</b>
<b>Restricted funds:</b>					
Allan and Nesta Ferguson Trust	-	20,000	10,000	-	10,000
Elrha	-	142,946	130,000	-	12,946
Guernsey Overseas Aid & Development Commission	-	23,729	17,973	-	5,756
Other Trusts and foundations	-	313,617	220,625	-	92,992
The Margaret Hayman Charitable Trust Fund	-	15,589	11,571	-	4,018
W F Southall Trust	-	3,000	3,000	-	-
<b>Total restricted funds</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>518,881</b>	<b>393,169</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>125,712</b>
<b>Total funds</b>	<b>357</b>	<b>528,781</b>	<b>396,997</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>132,141</b>
<b>Purposes of funds</b>					
<b>General funds:</b> These are the free reserves of the Charity, which can be used for any purpose within its charitable objects.					
<b>Restricted funds:</b> The following restricted funding was received over the course of the financial year for use in the 'Livelihoods' projects, 'Food Security' projects and for 'Disaster Risk Reduction & Management' Projects					